



RANI OF JHANSI

THE FLAME OF FREEDOM

Vol 539 | ₹70





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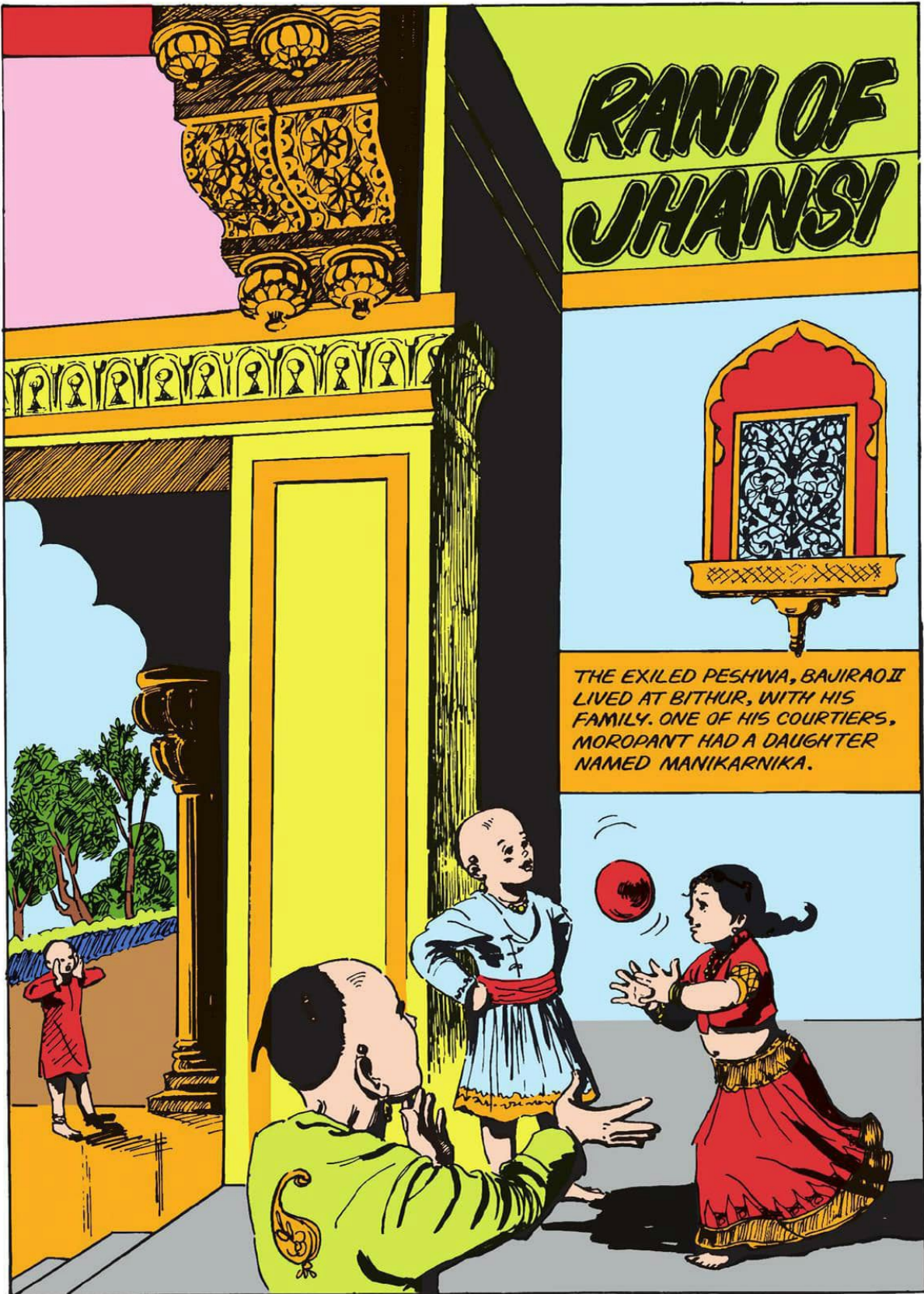
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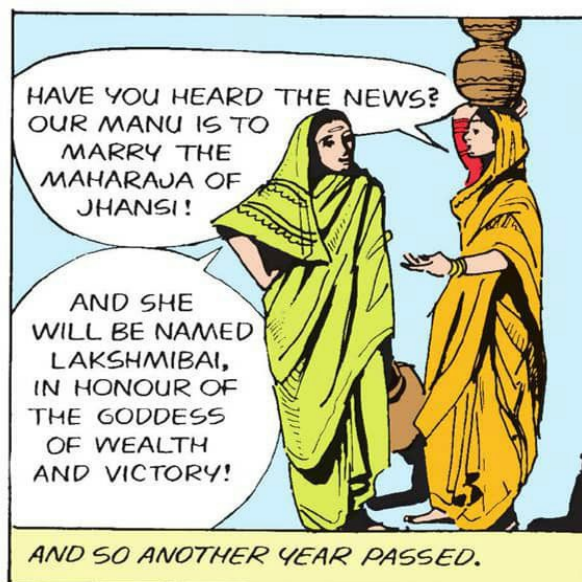
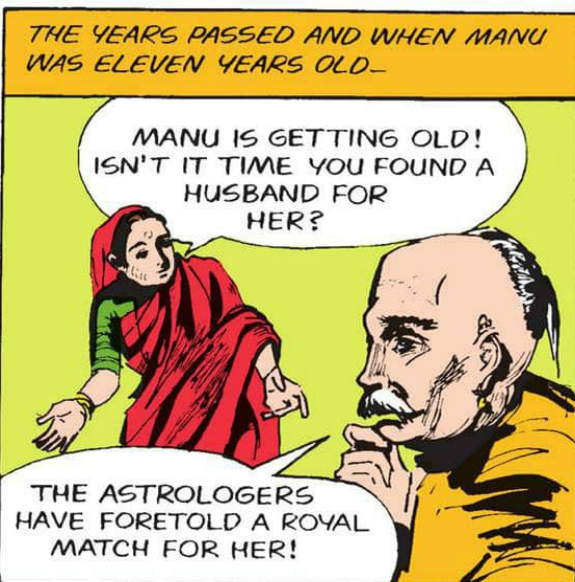
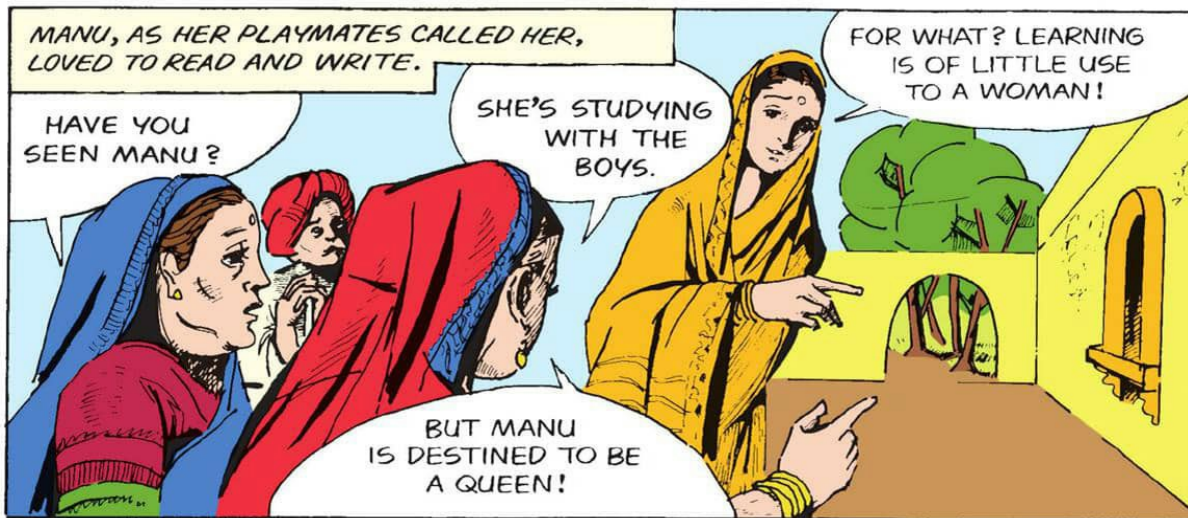
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RANI OF JHANSI

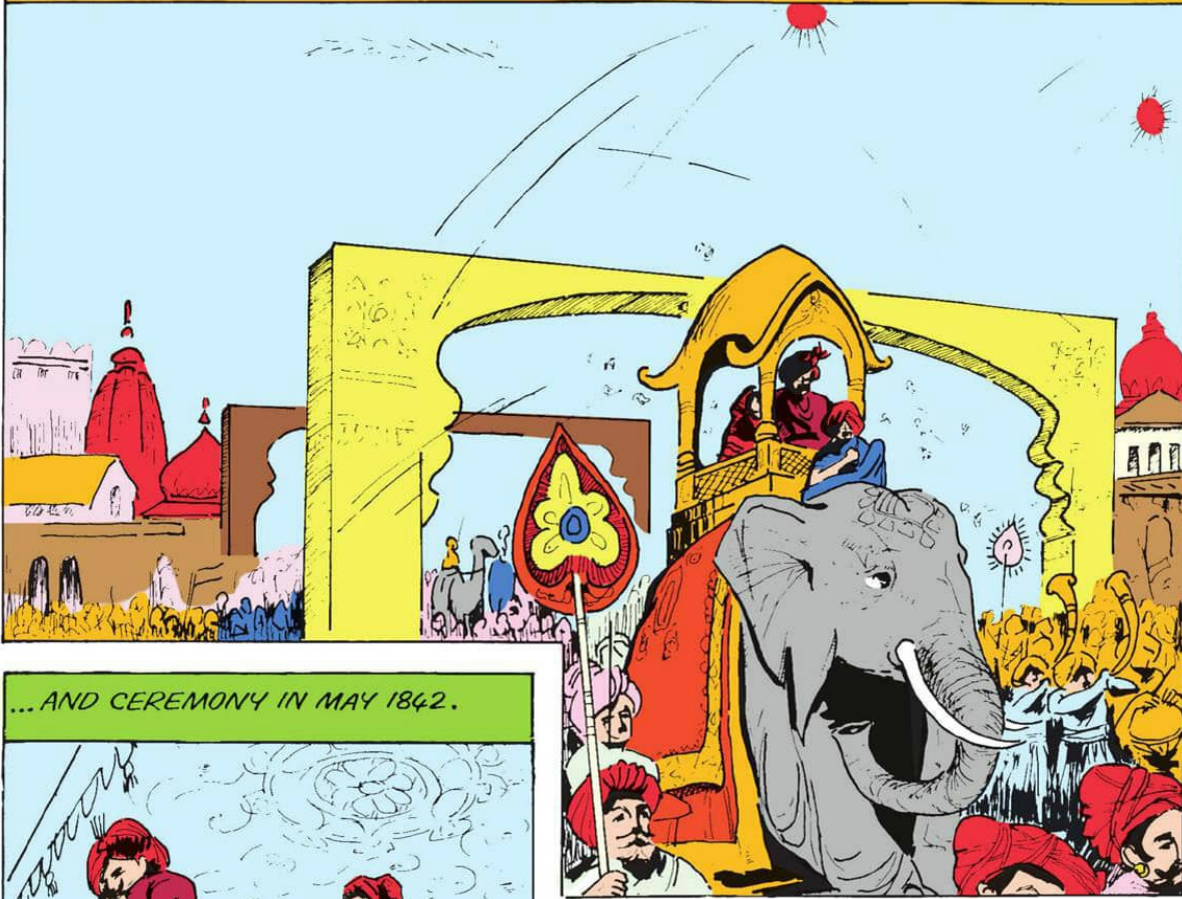


THE EXILED PESHWA, BAJIRAO II LIVED AT BITHUR, WITH HIS FAMILY. ONE OF HIS COURTIERS, MOROPANT HAD A DAUGHTER NAMED MANIKARNIKA.





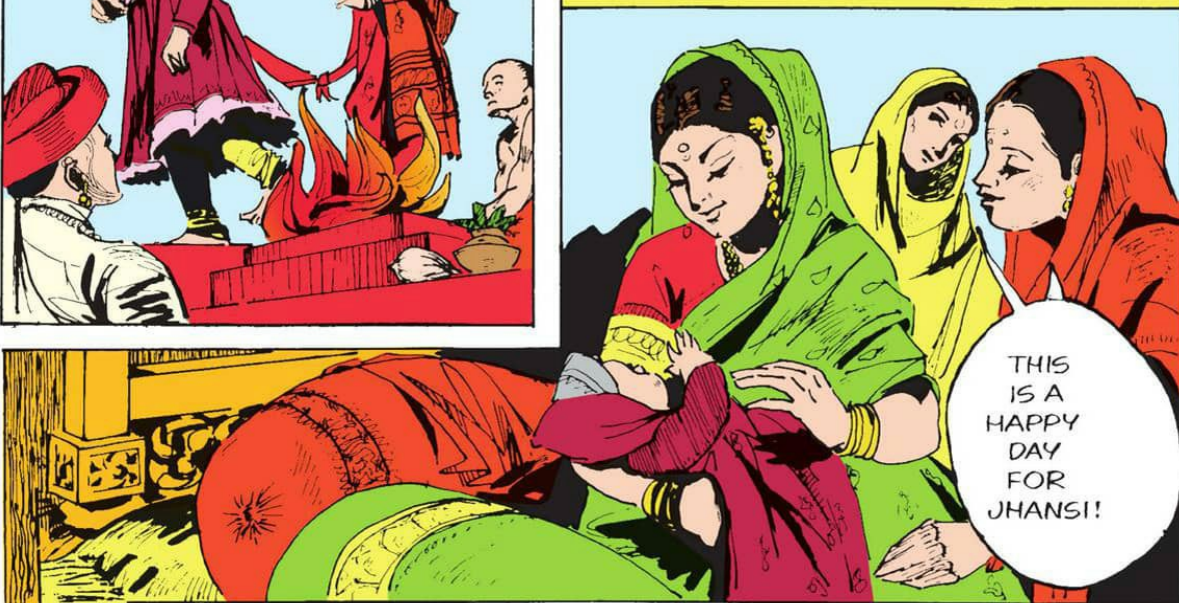
THE WEDDING WAS CELEBRATED WITH GREAT POMP...



...AND CEREMONY IN MAY 1842.



IN 1851 LAKSHMIBAI GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.



BUT THREE MONTHS LATER THE CHILD DIED.



THE MAHARAJA WAS PLUNGED IN GRIEF AND DESPAIR.

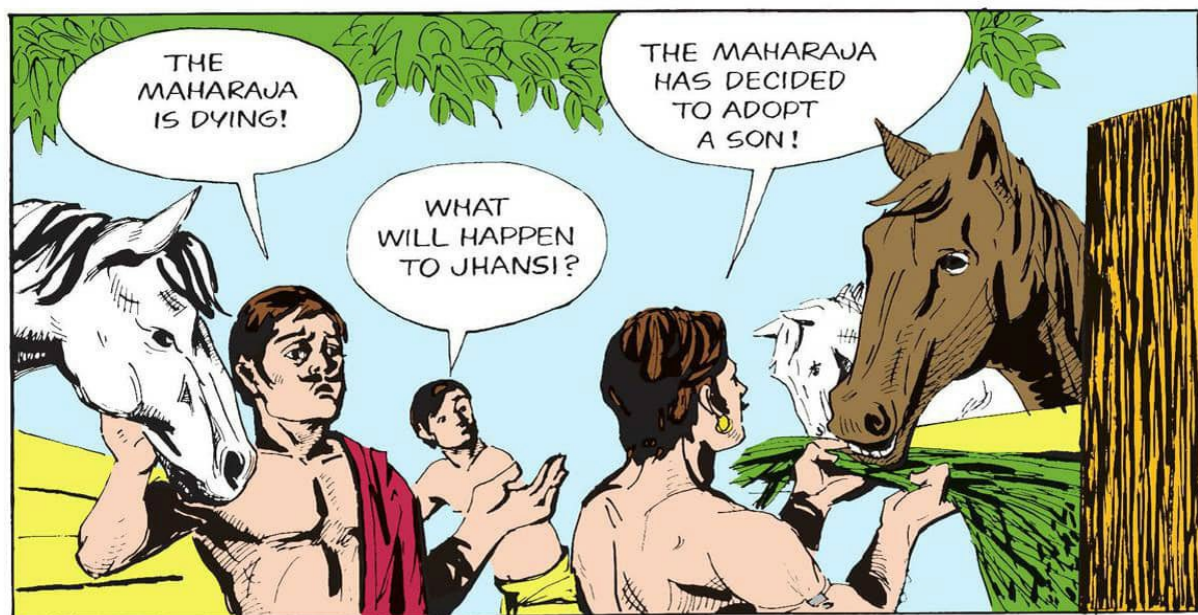


ALAS! I HAVE NO SON TO SUCCEED ME! WHAT SHALL I DO?

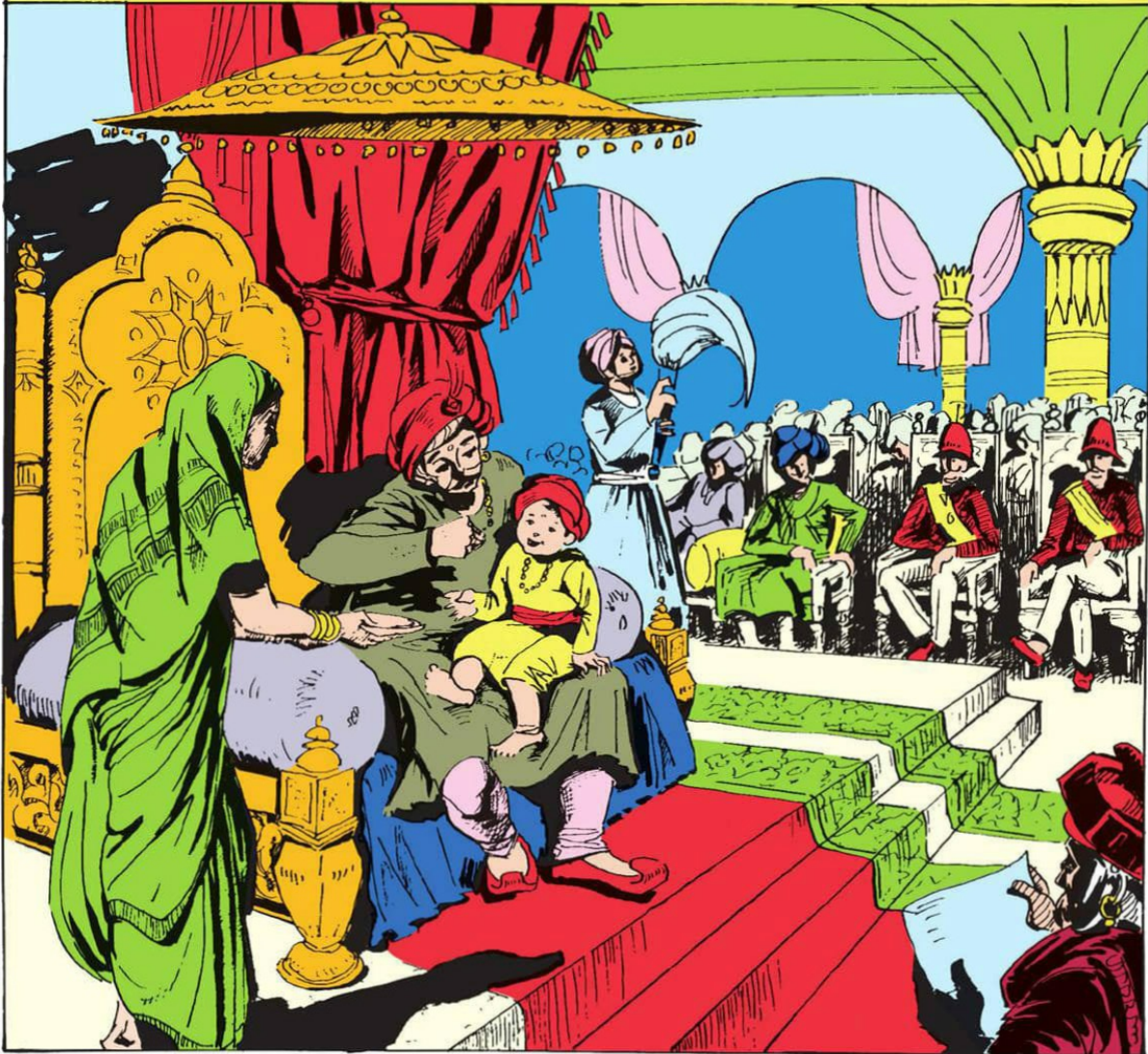
THE MAHARAJA IS DYING!

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO JHANSI?

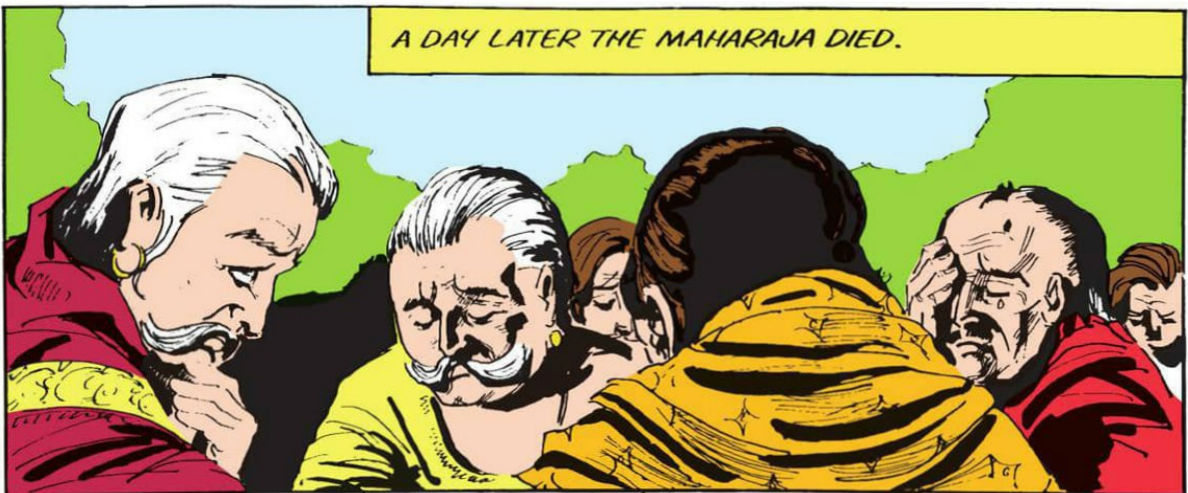
THE MAHARAJA HAS DECIDED TO ADOPT A SON!



THE ADOPTION TOOK PLACE ON NOVEMBER 19, 1853.



A DAY LATER THE MAHARAJA DIED.

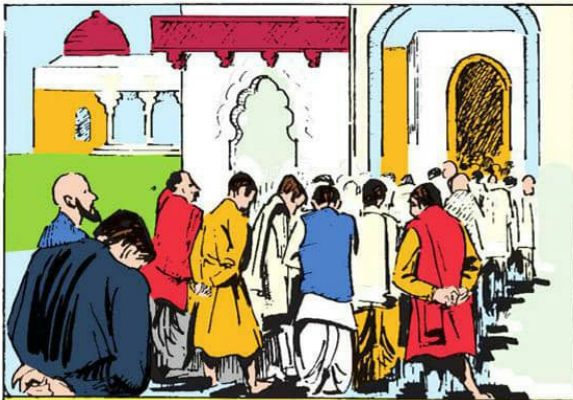




SO RANI LAKSHMIBAI DEVOTED HERSELF TO THE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE.



BUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL REJECTED THE PETITION.



IT WAS A DAY OF MOURNING, IN JHANSI.

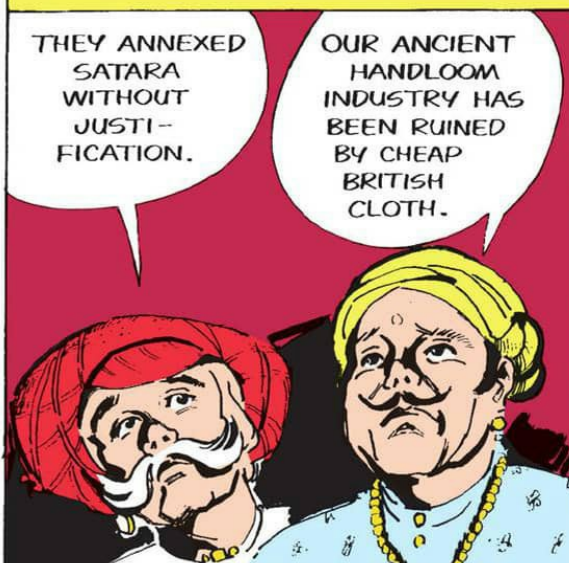
THE COMPLETE SUPPORT OF HER PEOPLE RENEWED LAKSHMIBAI'S SPIRIT.

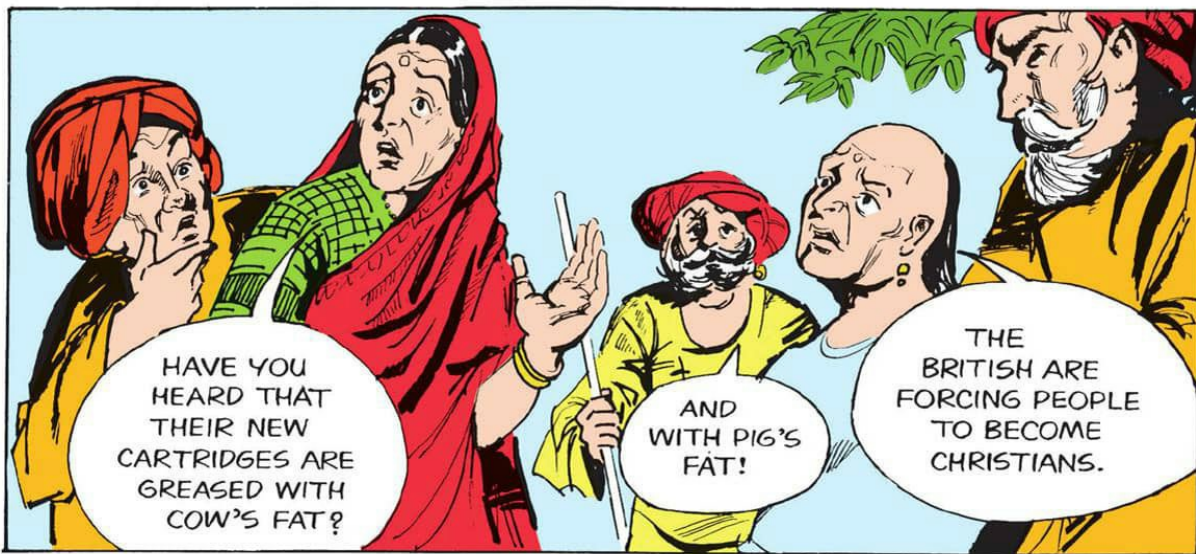


BUT...



THE BRITISH WERE BECOMING MORE AND MORE UNPOPULAR.





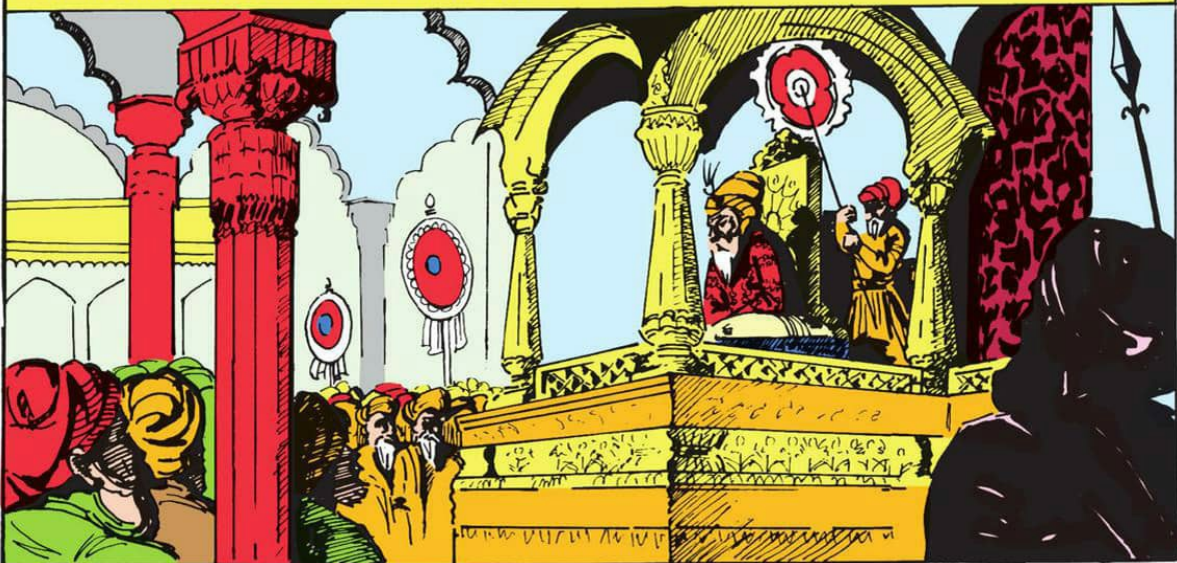
ON MAY 10, 1857 THE GARRISON OF MEERUT OPENLY REVOLTED, SHOT THEIR OFFICERS AND RELEASED IMPRISONED COMRADES.



THEN THEY MARCHED TO DELHI WHERE THEY RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME.



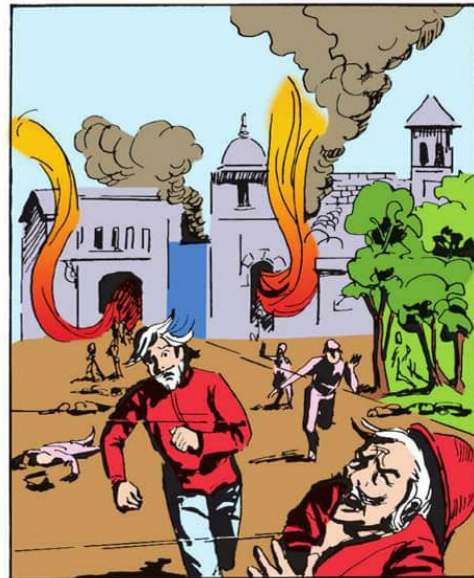
THE AGED EX-EMPEROR WAS REINSTATED ON THE MUGHAL THRONE AND DELHI BECAME THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE NATIONALIST SOLDIERS.



THE BRITISH RAN TO LAKSHMIBAI AND BEGGED FOR HELP.



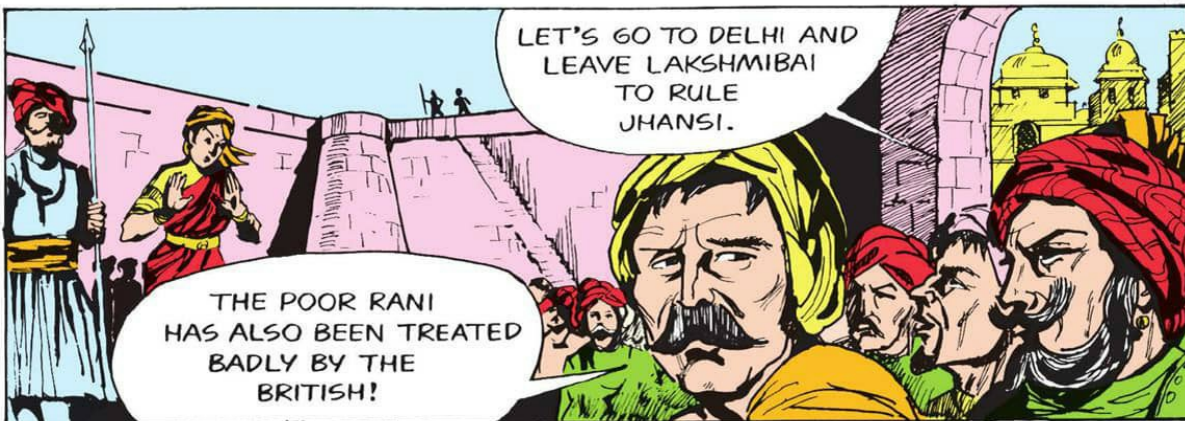
YOU REFUSED ME MY KINGDOM WHEN I ASKED FOR IT. NOW THAT YOU CANNOT KEEP IT, YOU ARE HANDING IT TO ME! THE INDIAN TROOPS WILL DESTROY ME IF I GIVE YOU PROTECTION. YOU HAD BETTER SAVE YOUR LIVES AS BEST YOU CAN.



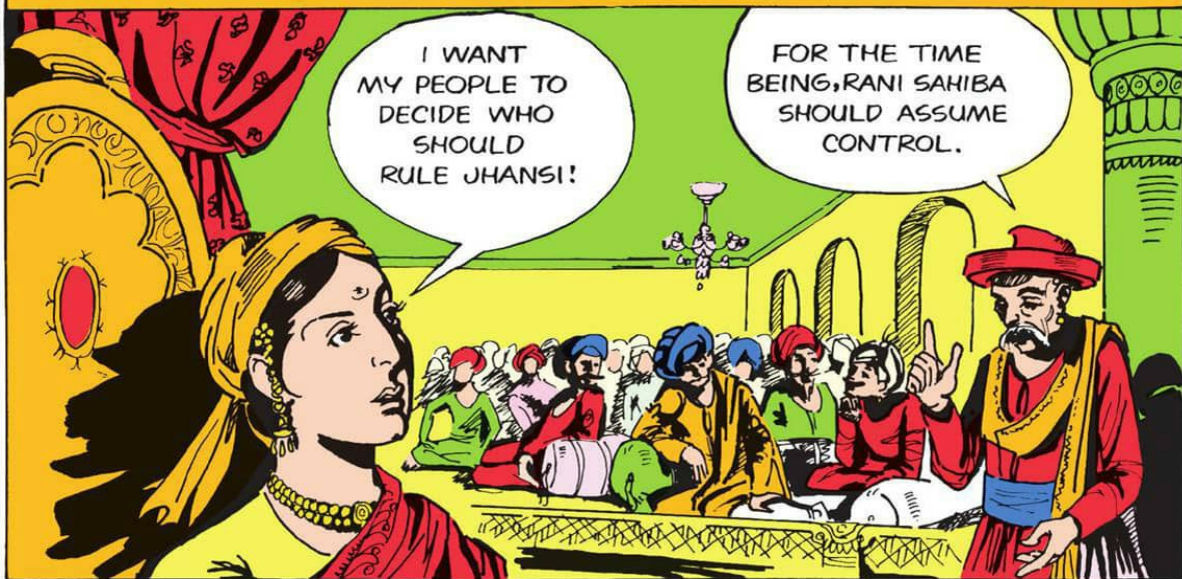
THE BRITISH WERE POWERLESS AGAINST THE NATIONALIST SOLDIERS AND WERE COMPLETELY ROUTED.

LET'S GO TO DELHI AND LEAVE LAKSHMIBAI TO RULE JHANSI.

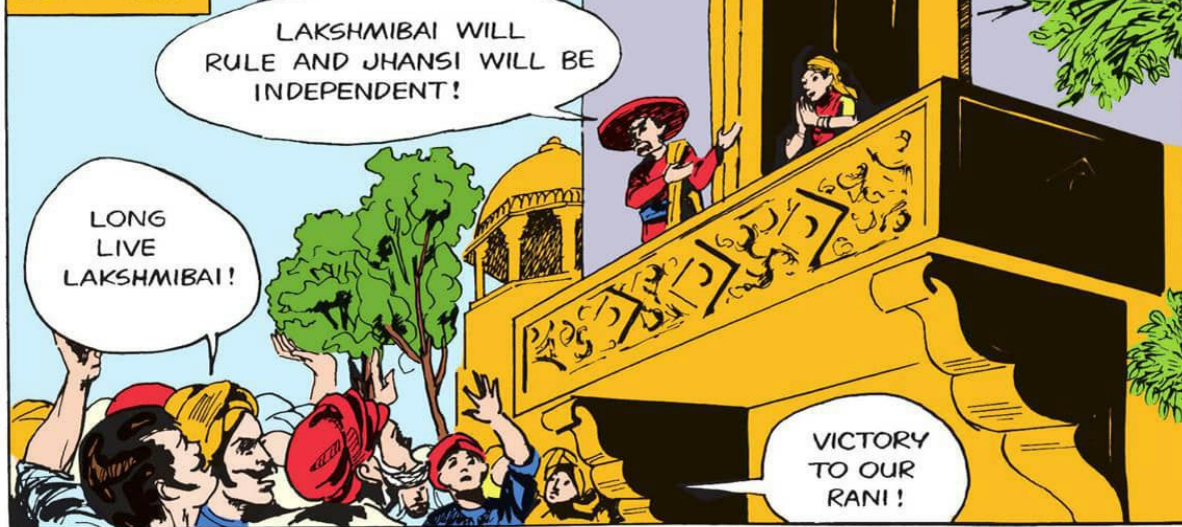
THE POOR RANI HAS ALSO BEEN TREATED BADLY BY THE BRITISH!



BUT RANI LAKSHMIBAI CALLED A CONFERENCE OF ALL CLASSES OF HER PEOPLE.

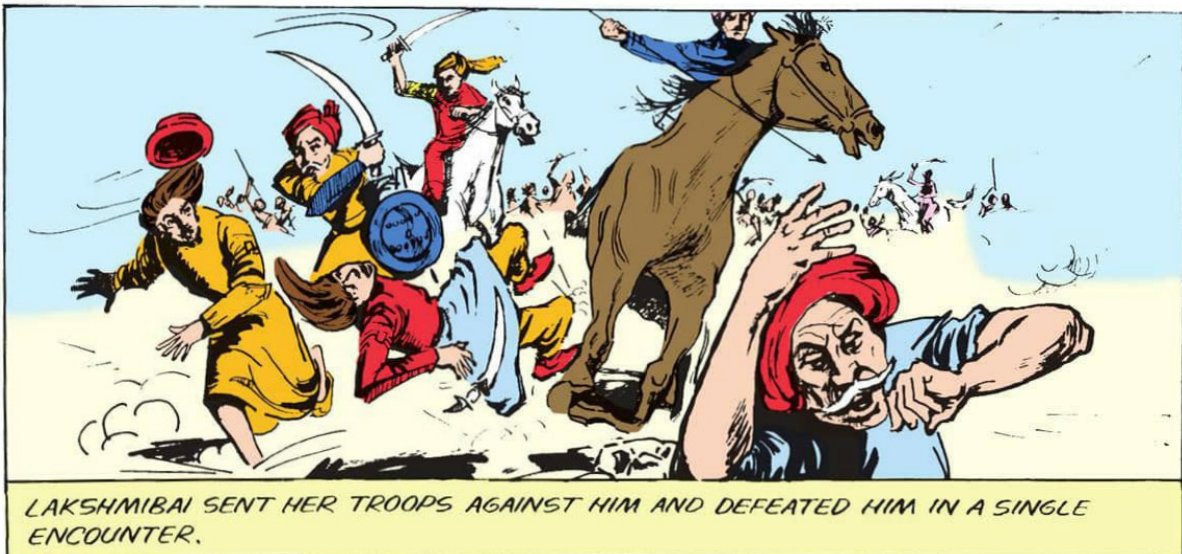


A LARGE CROWD WAS ANXIOUSLY WAITING OUTSIDE FOR THE DECISION OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

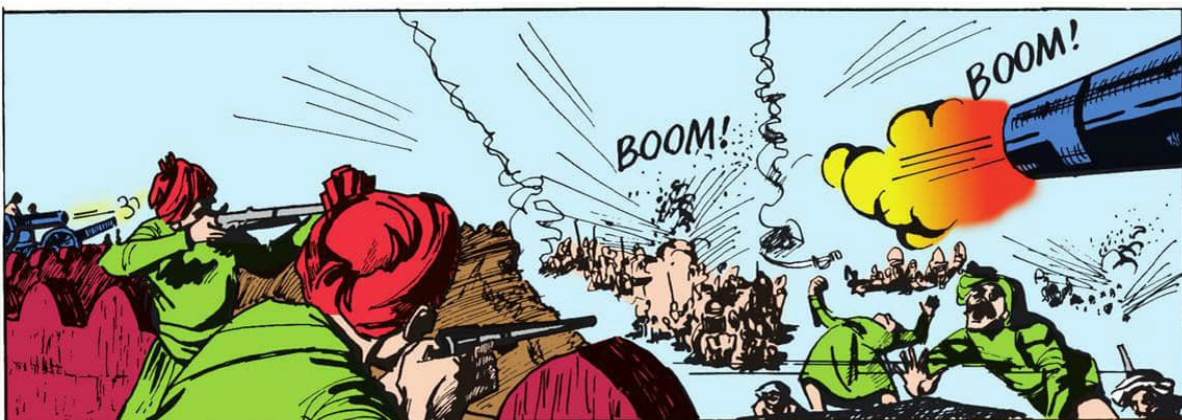




THE FIRST CHALLENGE TO LAKSHMIBAI'S RULE CAME FROM SADASHIV RAO, A DISTANT NEPHEW OF THE LATE MAHARAJA.



THE PRINCES OF DATIA AND ORCHA, TWO NEIGHBOUR STATES, TRIED TO WREST JHANSI FROM LAKSHMIBAI BUT HER TROOPS DEFEATED THEM.



LAKSHMIBAI'S TROOPS OPENED FIRE AND THE INVADERS RETREATED IN CONFUSION.

THE ORCHA TROOPS SILENTLY MOVED FOUR GUNS UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS AND MADE A MASSIVE ATTACK ON THE JHANSI FORCES.



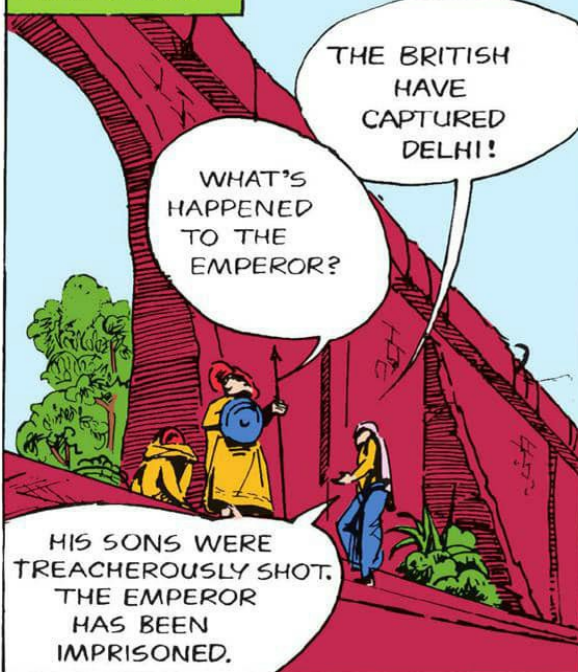
ENCOURAGED BY THEIR QUEEN, THE JHANSI TROOPS ROUTED THE ENEMY.



RANI LAKSHMIBAI HELD A GRAND DURBAR TO CELEBRATE HER VICTORY.



HOWEVER THERE WAS BAD NEWS FROM DELHI.



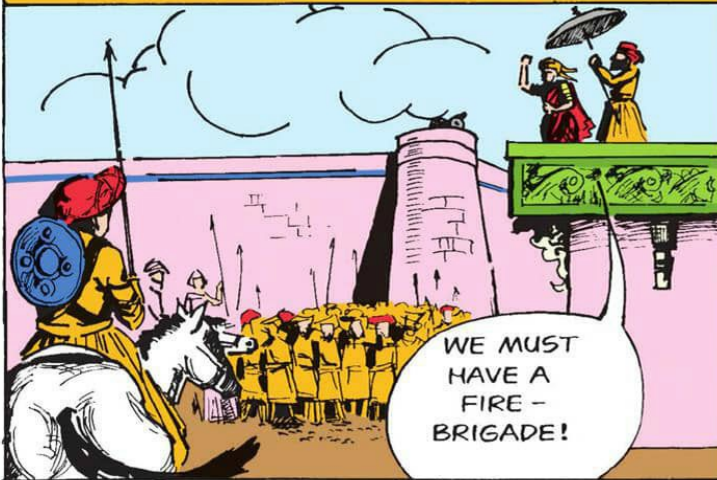
NANA SAHEB'S ARMY HAS BEEN DEFEATED AND KANPUR REOCCUPIED.

WILL IT BE JHANSI'S TURN NEXT?

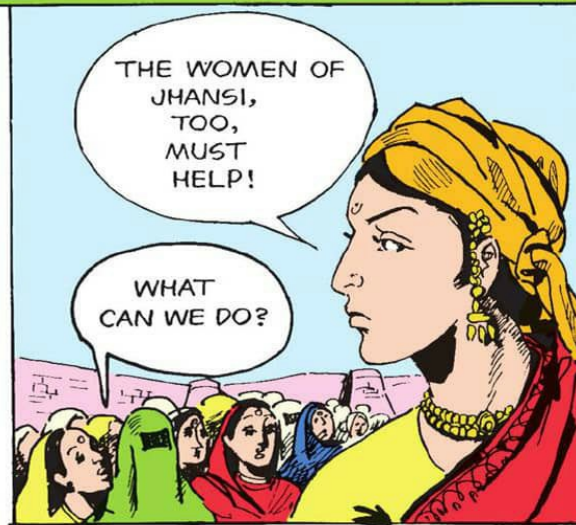
ALL OF OUDH HAS BEEN RECONQUERED BY THE BRITISH.



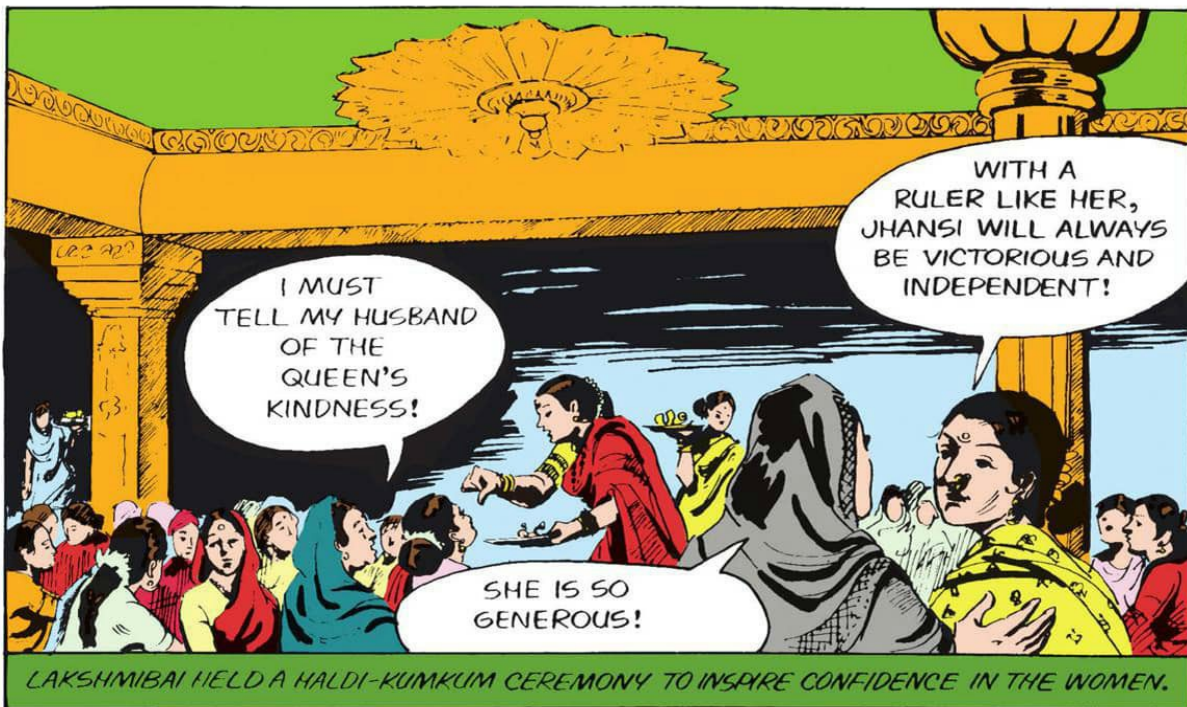
SO LAKSHMIBAI BEGAN TO MAKE PREPARATIONS TO FACE AN ATTACK FROM THE BRITISH.



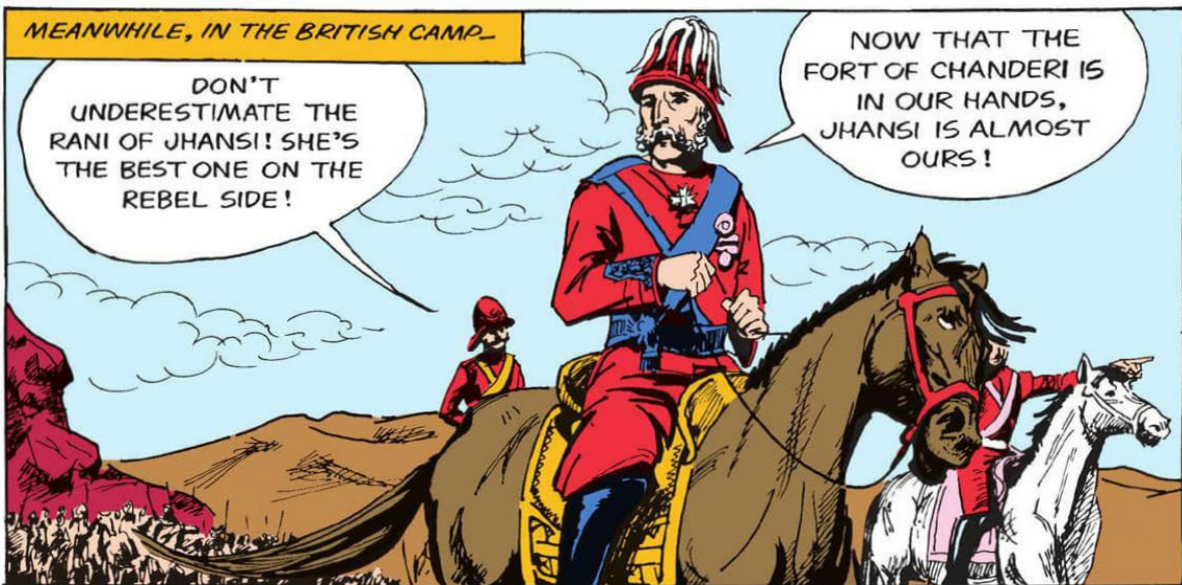
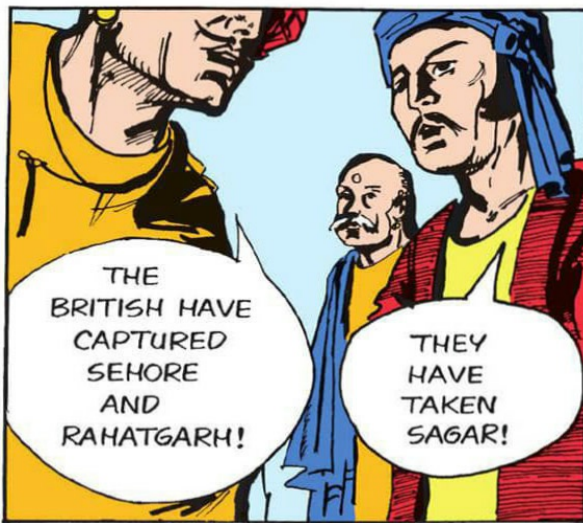
THEN THE RANI CALLED FOR MEN TO ENLIST IN HER ARMY.

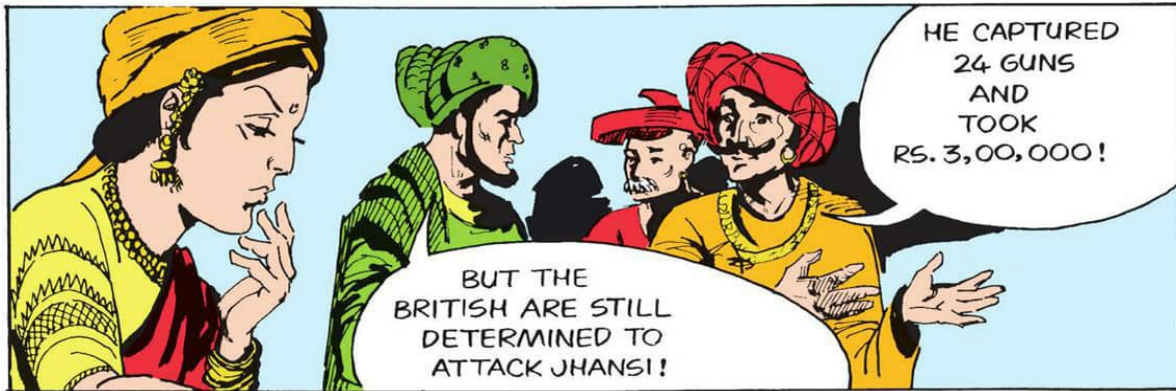


WOMEN WERE ENLISTED AS TROOPERS AND GUNNERS AND TAUGHT TO RIDE, SHOOT AND FENCE. THEY TOOK ON WATCH DUTIES AND CARED FOR THE WOUNDED.

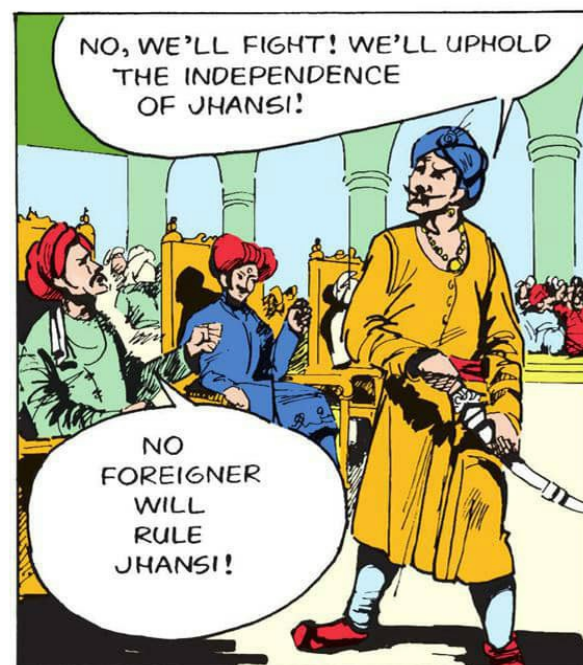


LAKSHMIBAI HELD A HALDI-KUMKUM CEREMONY TO INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN THE WOMEN.

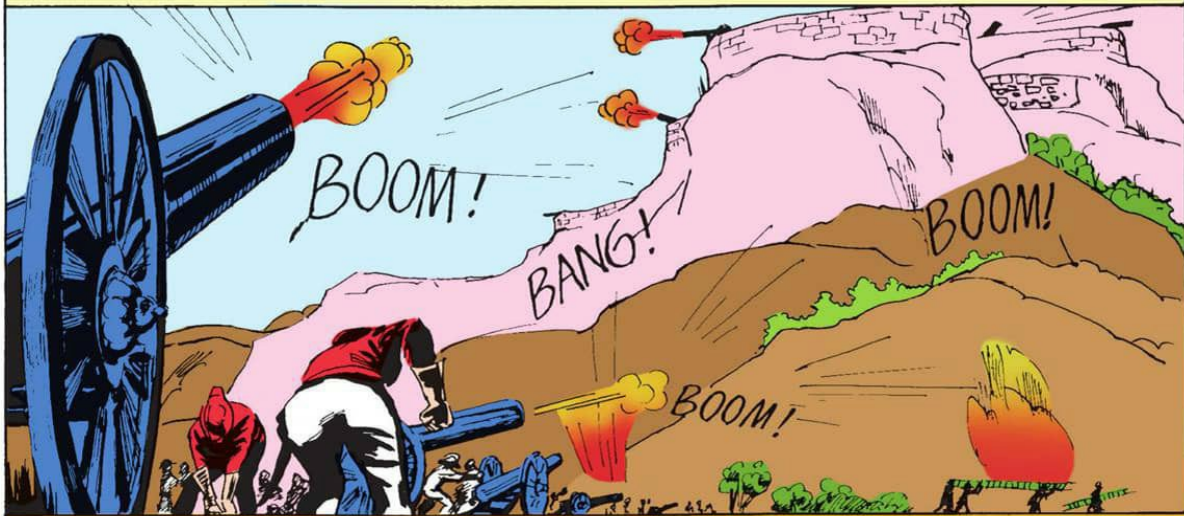




LAKSHMIBAI CALLED A REPRESENTATIVE MEETING OF HER PEOPLE AND ASKED IF THEY WANTED TO DEFEND THE CITY OR SUE FOR PEACE.



EARLY ON MARCH 25, 1858 BRITISH GUNS BEGAN TO BOMBARD JHANSI. BUT LAKSHMIBAI'S GUNNERS ANSWERED SHOT FOR SHOT.



FOR 5 DAYS THE BRITISH GUNS POUNDED DAY AND NIGHT BUT WITH LITTLE RESULT.

THEN A PARAPET AND TOWER WERE SLIGHTLY DAMAGED.



COME ON, LET'S REPAIR THE BREACH!

WE'LL NEVER LET THE FOREIGNER IN!

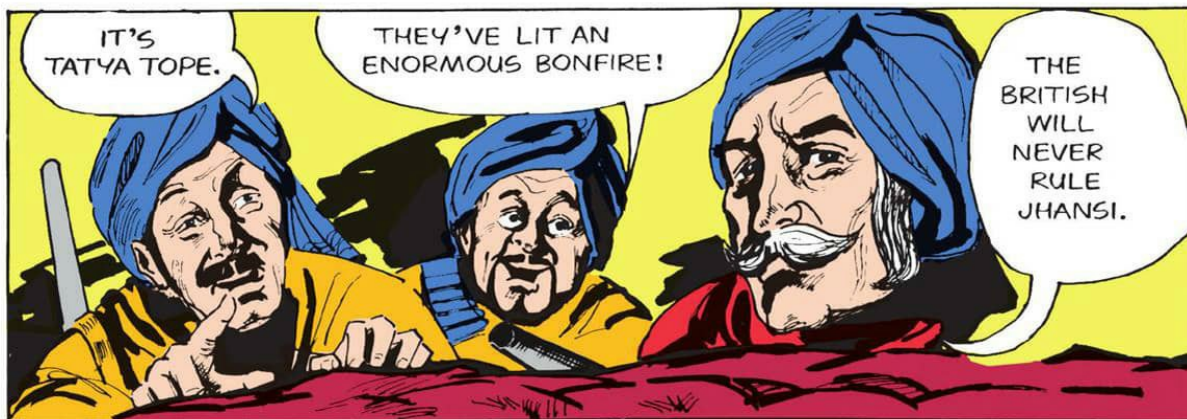
LOOK! TATYA TOPE IS COMING TO OUR RESCUE!



WE'RE SAVED!

IT'S TATYA TOPE.

THEY'VE LIT AN ENORMOUS BONFIRE!



THE BRITISH WILL NEVER RULE JHANSI.

AT NIGHT THE BRITISH BROUGHT TWO 24-POUNDERS AND BOMBARDED TATYA'S MEN.



AND THE NEXT DAY THE BRITISH ROUTED TATYA'S ARMY IN A SINGLE ENCOUNTER.



LAKSHMIBAI ASSEMBLED HER OFFICERS.



ALL IS LOST!

WE MUSTN'T LOSE HEART. WE CAN FIGHT THE BRITISH ALONE. YOU HAVE FOUGHT WITH MATCHLESS COURAGE BEFORE. I AM DEPENDING ON YOU. I KNOW YOU WILL DO IT!

WE WILL FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN.

VICTORY WILL BE OURS!

WE WON'T GIVE UP.

ON APRIL 3, 1858 -



LOOK!
THERE'S WHERE
WE SHOULD
CLIMB!



OUR ALLY IN THE QUEEN'S
CAMP HAS KEPT HIS WORD!

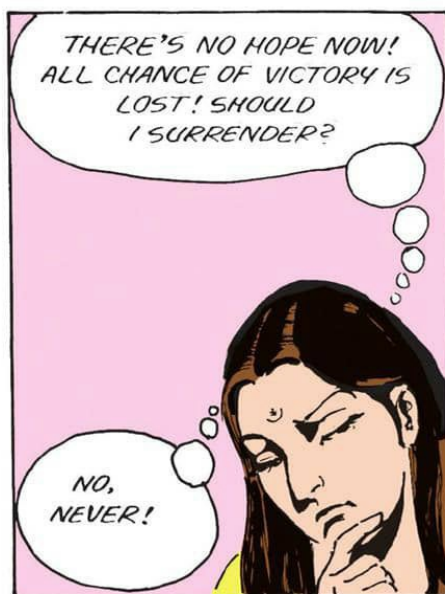
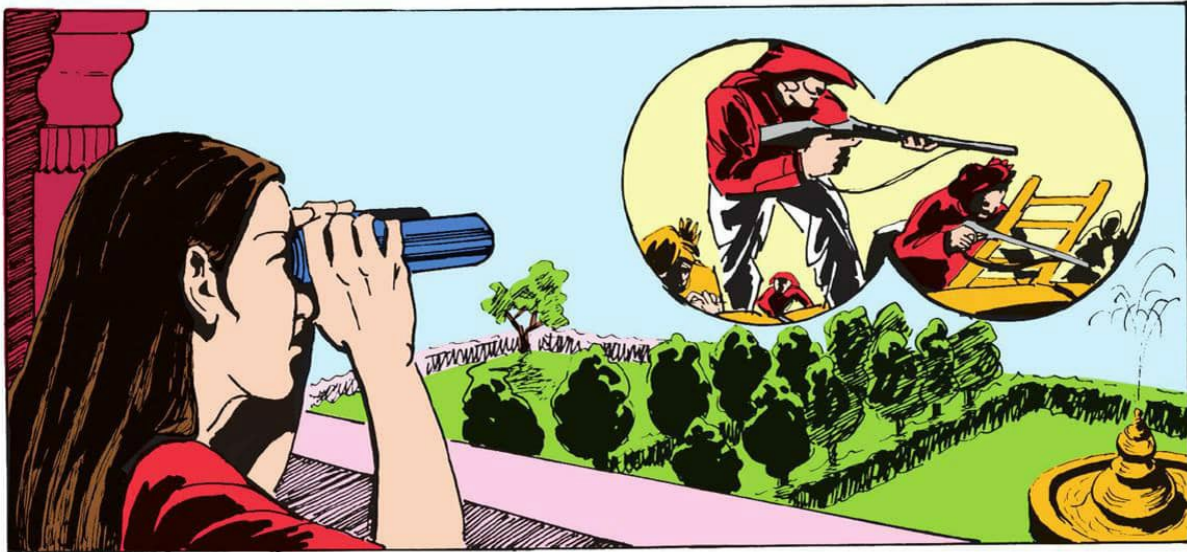
HE
WAS WELL-
PAID!



THE BRITISH
ARE UPON US!

LET THEM COME!
WE'LL SHOW THEM
HOW THE
MEN OF JHANSI
FIGHT!



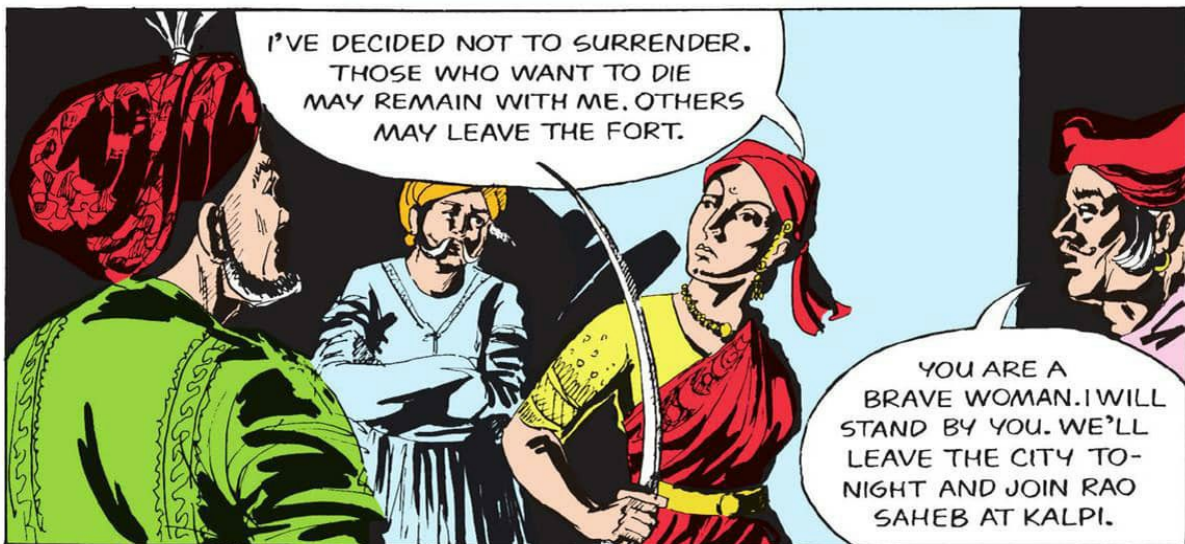




THE COUNTER ATTACK WAS SO UNEXPECTED AND FIERCE THAT THE BRITISH WERE FORCED TO TAKE COVER.



BUT THIS WAS ONLY A SHORT RESPITE.



I'VE DECIDED NOT TO SURRENDER. THOSE WHO WANT TO DIE MAY REMAIN WITH ME. OTHERS MAY LEAVE THE FORT.

YOU ARE A BRAVE WOMAN. I WILL STAND BY YOU. WE'LL LEAVE THE CITY TONIGHT AND JOIN RAO SAHEB AT KALPI.



LAKSHMIBAI RODE INTO RAO SAHEB'S CAMP AT KALPI.

WELCOME BRAVE WARRIOR.
I NEED YOUR SUPPORT IN
MY STRUGGLE.

NOTHING WILL GIVE ME GREATER HAPPINESS
THAN TO DIE ON THE BATTLE-FIELD
SERVING THE MARATHA STANDARD!



I WOULD LIKE
YOU TO INSPECT THE
TROOPS.

YOU MUST
HAVE STRICT DISCIPLINE
IN THE RANKS. THERE SHOULD
BE MILITARY DRILL AND EXERCISES
EVERY MORNING.



THE BRITISH ARE
PLANNING A
SIEGE ON KALPI!

LET'S
GO OUT AND
MEET THEM AT
KONCH.

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. WE'LL
FACE THEM IN THE OPEN.



WE
MUST HAVE
A STRONG
REARGUARD!

WE'RE ALL
VETERANS IN
THE ART OF WAR!
LET THE BRITISH
COME!



BUT THE OVER-CONFIDENT NATIONALIST LEADERS DID NOT HEED LAKSHMIBAI'S COUNSEL ABOUT A STRONG REARGUARD AND RAO SAHEB'S ARMY WAS ROUTED.



RAO SAHEB HELD A COUNCIL OF WAR TO CONSIDER THEIR NEXT MOVE.



BUT THE CLEVER STRATEGY OF THE BRITISH AGAIN WON THE DAY AND RAO SAHEB'S ARMY FLED IN CONFUSION.



NOW LAKSHMIBAI MOUNTED HER HORSE AND ATTACKED THE ENEMY LIKE A TIGRESS.



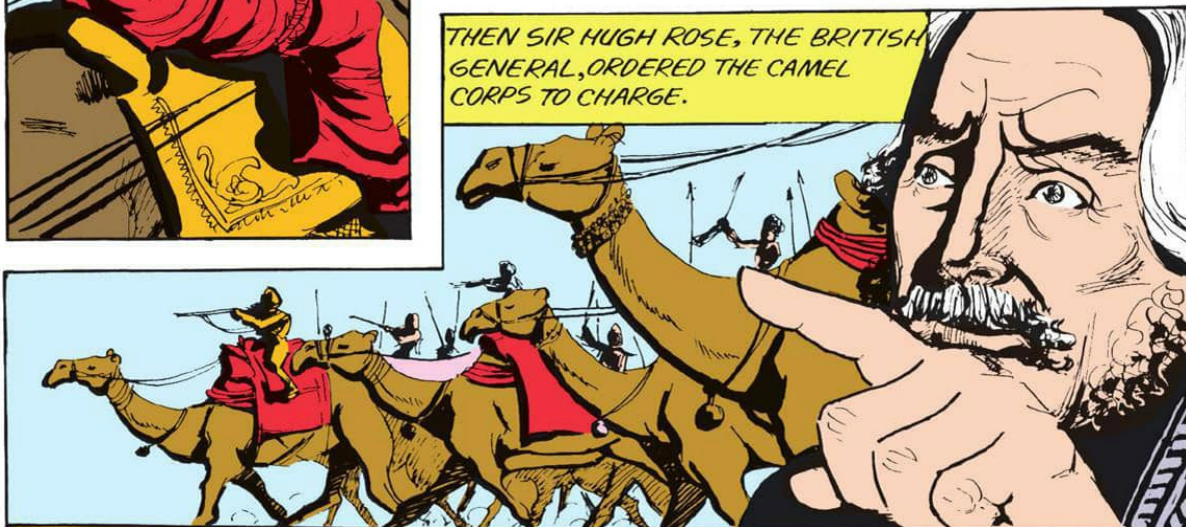
HER EXAMPLE ENCOURAGED THE OTHER LEADERS WHO NOW DASHED FORWARD TO JOIN THE ATTACK.

COME ON! VICTORY WILL BE OURS!

FOLLOW THE RANI OF JHANSI! THE ENEMIES ARE RETREATING!

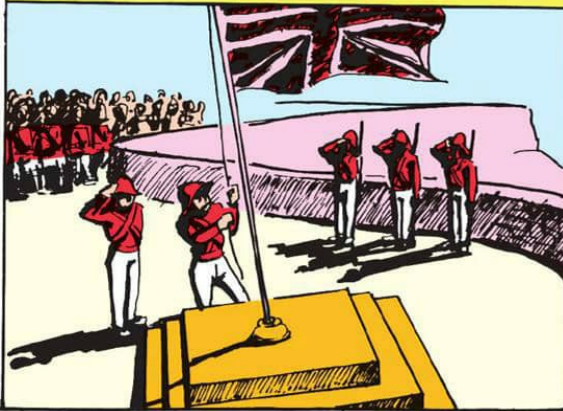


THEN SIR HUGH ROSE, THE BRITISH GENERAL, ORDERED THE CAMEL CORPS TO CHARGE.



THE PESHWA'S MEN, UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE ATTACK, FELL BACK IN CONFUSION.

THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT WAS NOW COMPLETELY SHATTERED. THE BRITISH TOOK OVER THE FORT OF KALPI ON MAY 24, 1858 WITHOUT FURTHER FIGHTING.



THE NATIONALIST CHIEFS HELD ANOTHER CONFERENCE.

ALL CHANCES OF VICTORY ARE AT AN END!

WE CAN HARASS THE ENEMY BY GUERRILLA WARFARE.



THAT'S AN EXCELLENT PLAN!

THAT WAS POSSIBLE FOR THE MARATHAS BECAUSE THEY POSSESSED UNCONQUERABLE FORTRESSES. WE CANNOT FIGHT WITHOUT A STRONG FORT.



I THINK WE SHOULD MARCH TO GWALIOR AND OBTAIN THE HELP OF THE MAHARAJA. WITH THAT FORT IN OUR HANDS WE CAN STILL CARRY ON THE WAR AND WIN.

I AGREE. THOUGH HE IS AN ALLY OF THE BRITISH, HIS PEOPLE ARE ON OUR SIDE.



HAS THE MAHARAJA OF GWALIOR AGREED TO GIVE US MONEY AND SUPPLIES?



NO! HE HAS ORDERED HIS TROOPS TO ATTACK US.

THE SIGHT OF LAKSHMIBAI WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE THE GWALIOR ARMY DROP THEIR GUNS.

LOOK! IT'S THE RANI OF JHANSI!!

HAIL, RANI OF JHANSI!

VICTORY TO LAKSHMIBAI!



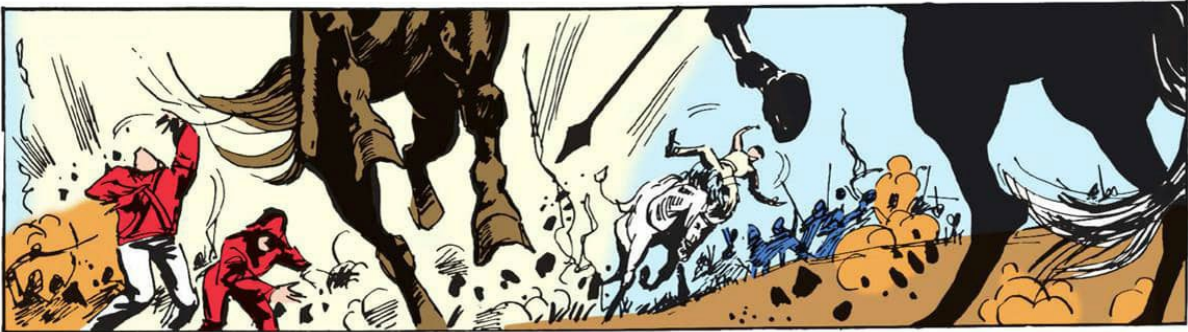
RAO SAHEB ENTERED GWALIOR IN TRIUMPH AND HELD A GRAND DURBAR TO PROCLAIM HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE MARATHA CONFEDERACY.



AS THE CEREMONIES CONTINUED, LAKSHMIBAI GREW IMPATIENT.



LAKSHMIBAI DRESSED IN A MAN'S GARB ADVANCED TO ATTACK THE ENEMY.



BRITISH RE-
INFORCEMENTS
HAVE
ARRIVED!
ALL IS
LOST!

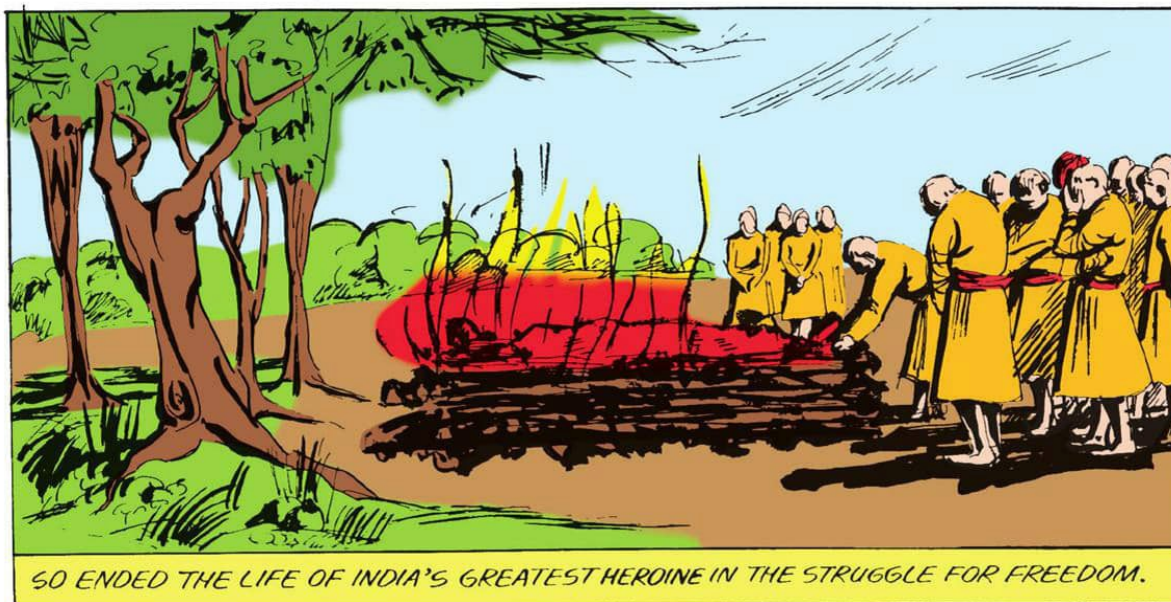
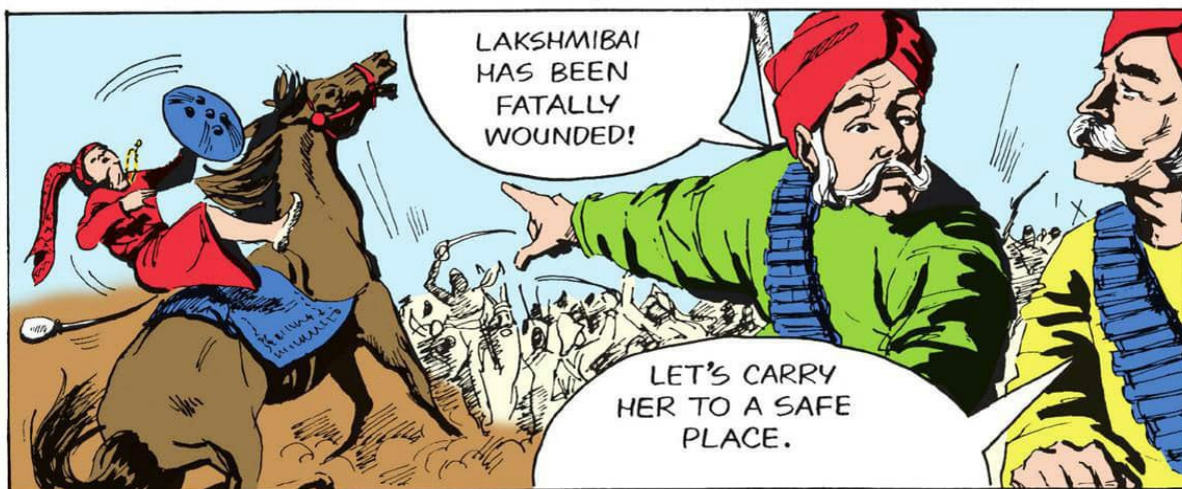
I WILL
NOT LOSE
HOPE! I WILL
NEVER
SURRENDER!



THE ARMIES WERE EVENLY MATCHED.

FORWARD!
COME ON!

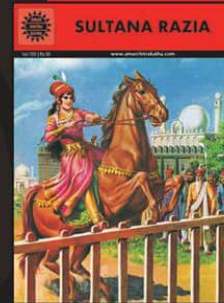
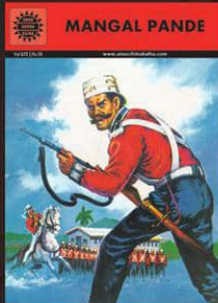




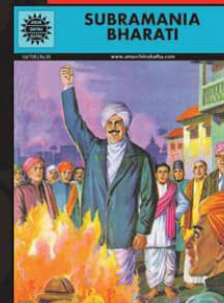
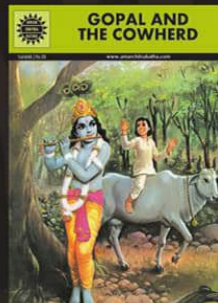
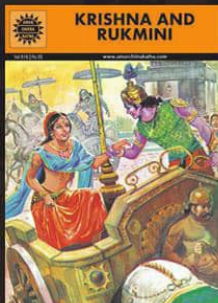
RANI OF JHANSI

She ruled over a small kingdom, but dreamt of freedom for the whole country. In the Great Revolt of 1857, Lakshmibai, the Rani of Jhansi, matched wits and force with the best of British generals. The image of the brave Rani of Jhansi charging her steed through enemy lines, her sword raised for the next thrust, is forever imprinted in Indian hearts.

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